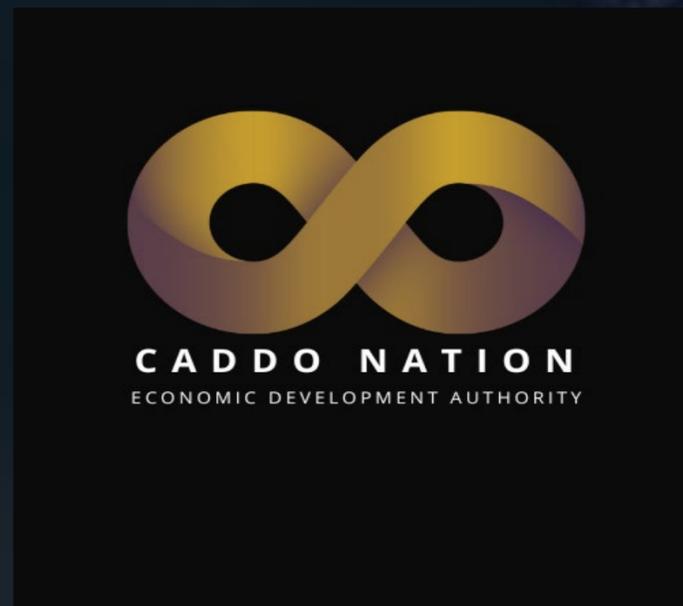


Stronger Together:

Building Lasting Relationships with Tribal Nations



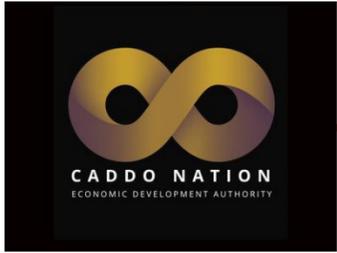
Zackaree S. Kelin
Vice-Chairman
CNEDA Board Of Directors



KAW NATION
INDUSTRIES



Sarah Yanez
CEO
Kaw Nation Industries



Why Indian Country Matters



Nationwide Scale

574 federally
recognized tribes –
sovereign
governments



Economic Impact

Billions in
construction &
development
projects annually



Gap to Fill

Remote & rural
tribes need
reliable
contractors



Call to Action

Stronger projects
happen when
tribal vision and
expertise meet

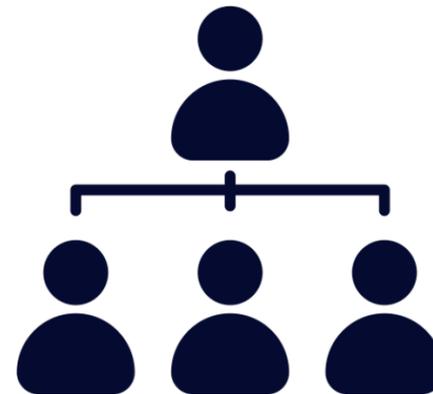


Sovereignty & Entities



Tribal Governments

Tribal council or administration contracting directly.



Tribal LLCs & Enterprises

Tribe passes its own LLC Act or enterprise code, and the entity is registered with the Tribe.



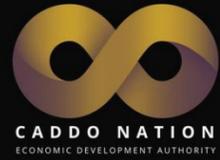
Chartered Corporations

Corporations created under federal law. Wholly owned arms of the Tribe, created for business.

Takeaway:

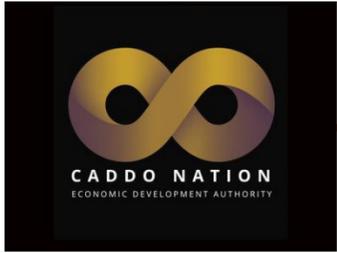
The type of tribal entity you contract with government, chartered corporation, or LLC determines how decisions are made, ~~who~~ disputes are handled, and how formal the process will feel. Just remember...they are all sovereign.

THE DIVERSITY OF NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES



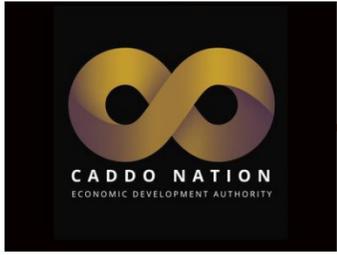
- VARIED LEVELS OF TECHNOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC SOPHISTICATION.
- THE ROLE OF TRIBAL COUNCILS AND GOVERNANCE IN DECISION-MAKING.
- DIVERSITY OF DEPARTMENTS AND ENTERPRISES





\$23

BILLION



Federal Spending on Public Construction (2023)



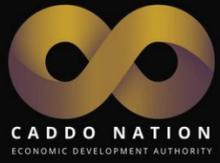
- In 2023, the federal government spent nearly \$451 billion on public construction.



- Includes infrastructure, social housing, and non-residential buildings.



Source: U.S. Federal Spending Reports (2023).

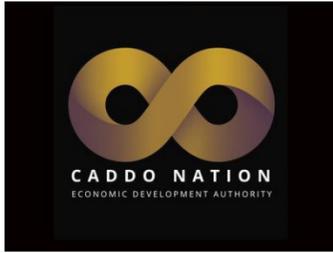


GENERAL SERVICES
ADMINISTRATION

Tribal Business in Federal Contracting

- \$23.3 billion awarded to tribal entities in FY 2023
- 16.3% increase from FY 2022
- 8th year of growth

** Source: Tribal Business News, 2023*

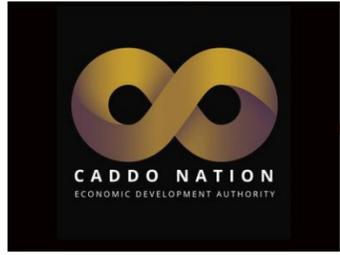


Long-Term Scale

- 1981–2021: \$202 billion total revenue (adjusted)
- Steady growth over four decades



Source: Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, 2024



Oklahoma Employment Forecast (2023–2025)



Construction is expected to lead state employment growth.



Projected to add 2,170 jobs (+2.7%).



Specialty trade contractors: +1,350 jobs



Construction of buildings: +640 jobs



Source: Oklahoma Economic Indicators, May 2024.



Contracting with Tribal Entities



TRIBAL GOVERNMENT

- Governed by tribal law & codes

- Indian Preference & TERO strongly apply

- Payments via council/finance office

- Disputes often in tribal court

TRIBAL CORPORATIONS

- Formed under federal/tribal law, run like corporations

- More flexible procurement, enterprise-driven

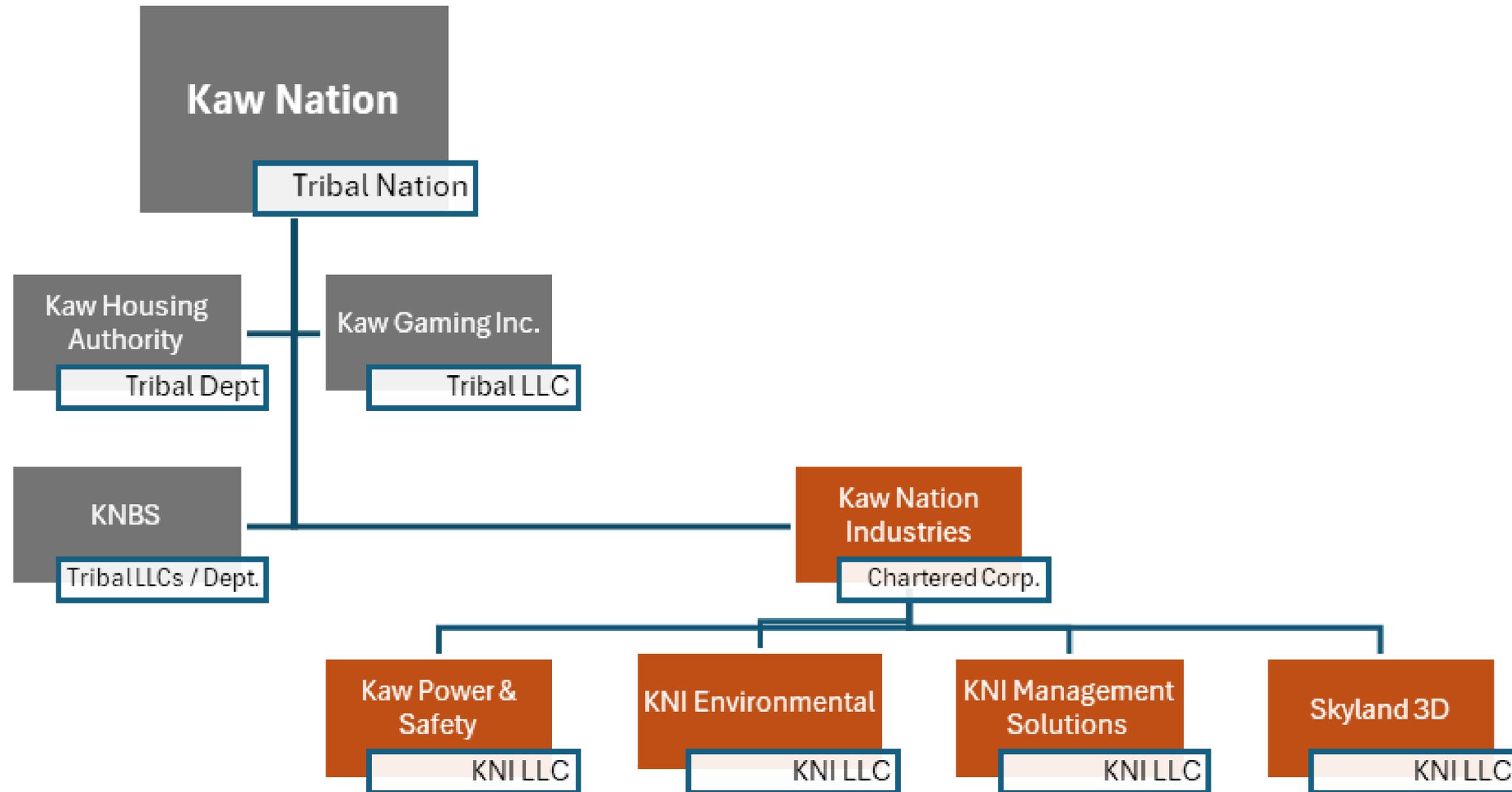
- Payments via corporate/LLC systems

- Disputes often via arbitration/contract terms

Takeaway:

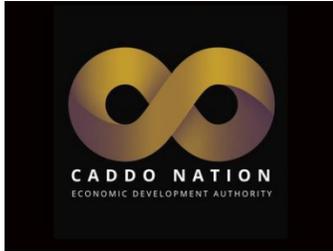
Both are sovereign. The difference is in how formal the process is, how fast decisions are made, and where disputes are resolved.

Kaw Nation



Takeaway:

The important part for you as contractors: you may deal with either side. One feels like public work; the other feels like private sector work. But both are sovereign.



Contracting Pathways = Partnership Opportunities



Indian Preference / TERO

Tribes may require Native hiring or subcontracting - plan early and strengthen bids by teaming with Native partners.

Buy Indian Act

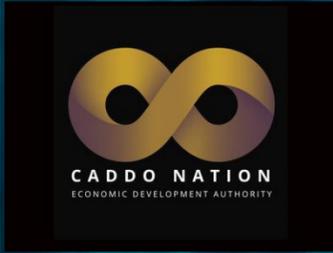
Federal agencies, such as BIA, IHS, etc. can set aside or sole-source to Native firms - Those firms will need subs and suppliers

Tribal 8(a) Firms

Tribally owned 8(a) firms can win direct awards at higher thresholds. Creating big subcontracting opportunities.

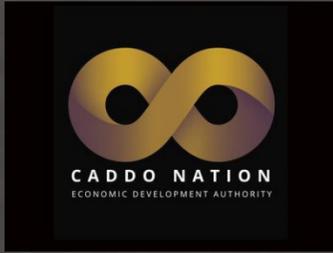
Takeaway:

These rules aren't barriers for non-native firms, they're doorways to partnership. If you understand the rules, the door is wider than you think.



Key Contracting Programs

- SBA 8(a) Program: main revenue driver
- SBA Small Business Set-Asides: ~18%
- Buy Indian Act: \$20–\$60 million annually
- HUBZone Program: expanded eligibility



Subcontracting Growth

- Rapid growth: 33% annually (2010–2021)
- DoD Indian Incentive Program: 5% rebate to primes for Native subcontracting

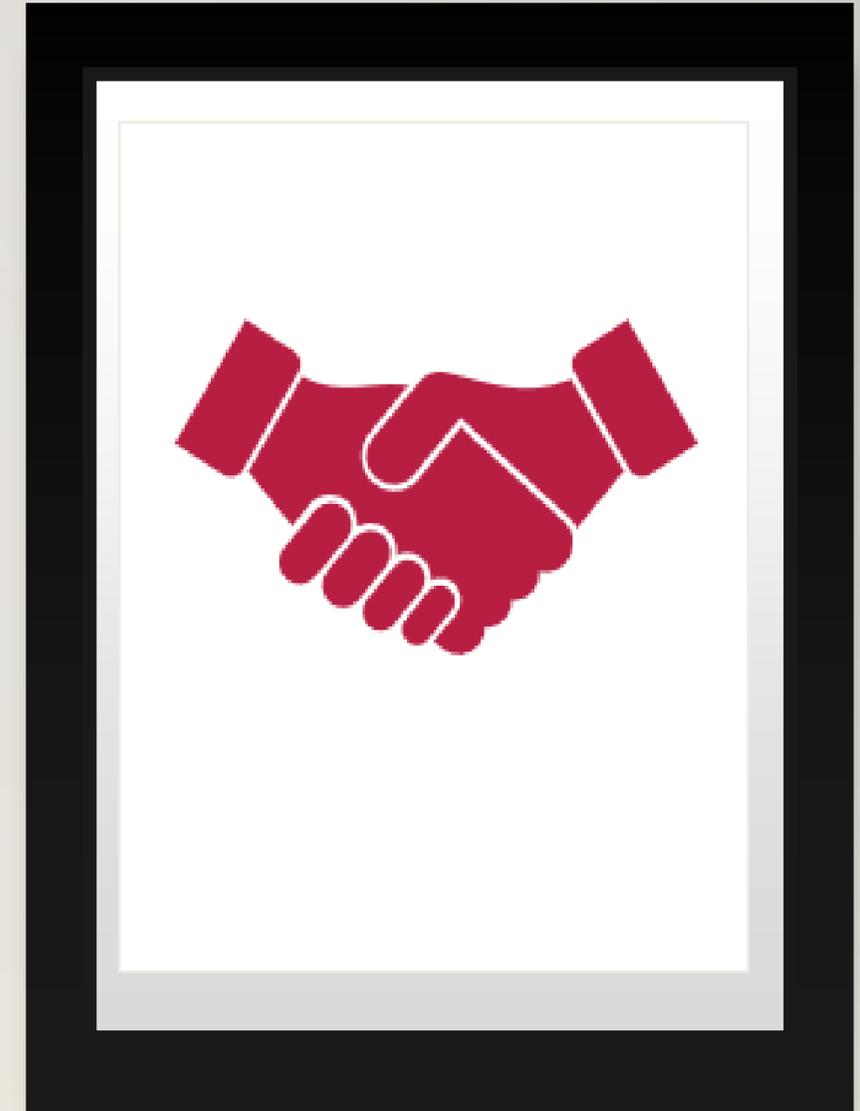
Source: Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, 2023



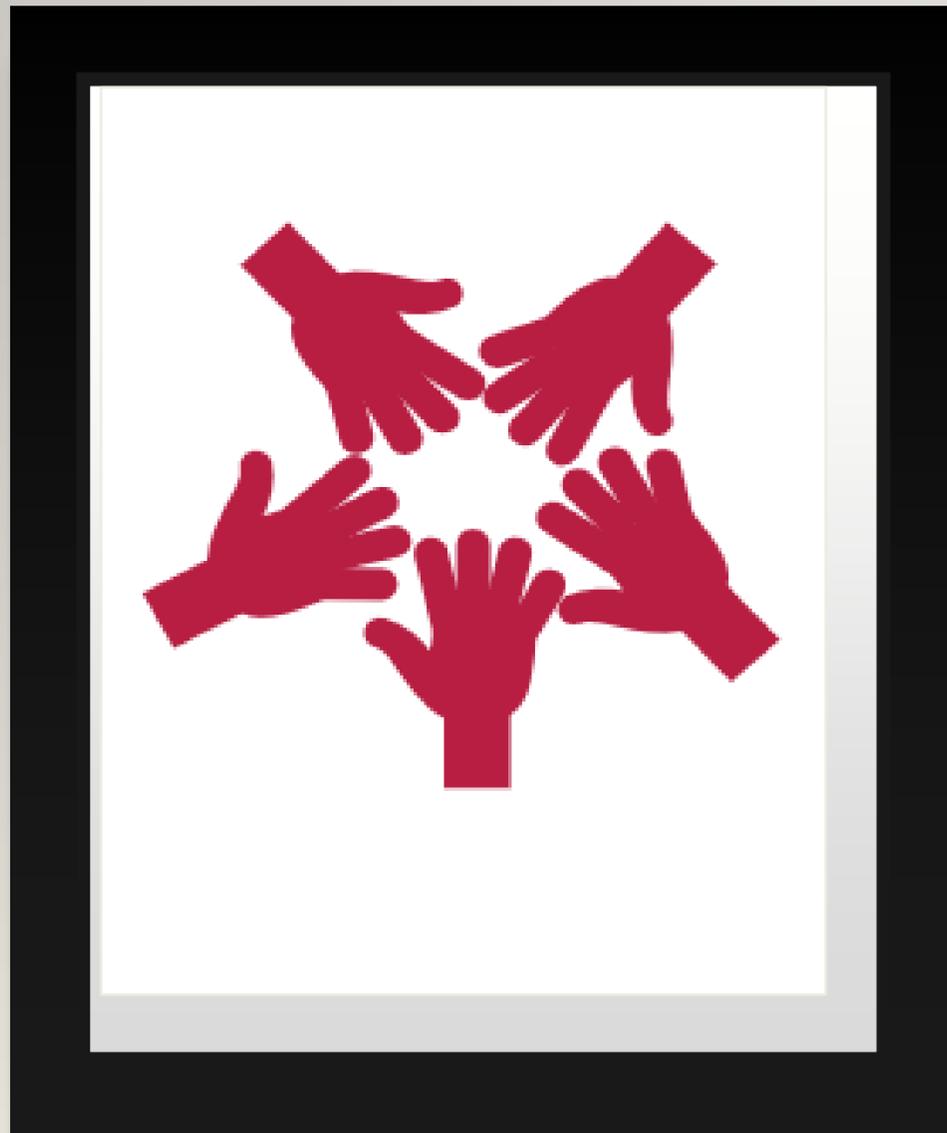
HOW TRIBES ENGAGE AS SUBCONTRACTORS



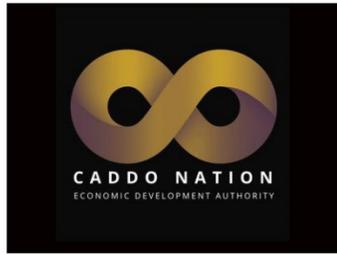
- **Direct Subcontracting:** Tribally owned firms bid as subcontractors under prime contracts.
- **Mentor-Protégé Programs:** SBA mentor-protégé allows tribes to pair with experienced primes to build capacity while subcontracting.
- **Joint Ventures:** Tribes can form **8(a) joint ventures** with primes—giving access to larger contracts while ensuring tribal participation.
- **Teaming Agreements:** Flexible arrangements for sharing scope, resources, and responsibility between primes and tribes.



BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND OVERCOMING CHALLENGES



- Common challenges in working with tribes and strategies to overcome them.
- Importance of relationship-building and cultural sensitivity.
- Emphasizing long-term benefits and community engagement.



Building Relationships



SHOW UP CONSISTENTLY & FOLLOW THROUGH

Tribes value reliability. Show up outside of the bid cycle - build a network within the Tribe

RESPECT THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Some contracts require council or board approval, which can extend timelines - be patient

CULTURAL AWARENESS

Use respectful language. Don't assume - ask questions about expectations, values, or local traditions

HIRE & PARTNER LOCALLY

Tribes notice when you hire their people or subcontract Native firms

01

02

03

04



05

06

07

08

COMMUNICATION & TRANSPARENCY

Be clear about scope, schedule, and costs. If issues arise, communicate early.

TRUST OVER TRANSACTIONS

Tribes are looking for partners, not just vendors. Delivering on small jobs builds credibility for larger ones.

UNDERSTAND TRIBAL FUNDING SOURCES

Grants/Federal dollars drive many projects - help tribes meet deadlines & compliance.

KEY CALL-OUT

Strong relationships aren't just a business advantage in Indian Country - they are the entry point. Without trust, you won't even get to the table.



Practical Tips



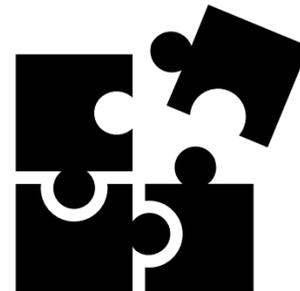
Lead with Listening

Ask about the Tribe's priorities before offering solutions - don't assume you know what they want/need.



Understand
decision-making

Lasting Relationships



Be Visible Locally

Stop by the job site, attend a tribal event, or sponsor something small for the community

Bring Solutions, Not Just Bids

Address housing shortages, workforce needs, infrastructure creativity



Align with
Tribal Values

Respect Continuity

Tribal leadership can change with elections; build relationships that can last through transitions



Mistakes to Avoid



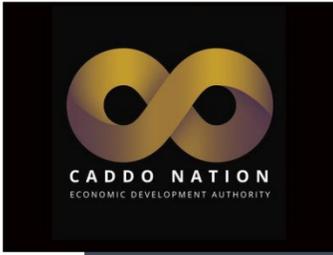
- Treating tribes like small towns (they are sovereign governments).
- Assuming preference rules exclude non-natives.
- Breaking promises - reputation travels fast.
- Cultural Missteps - don't use dismissive language.

- Think that tribal land is accountability free - expect bonding & insurance requirements.
- Don't forget to check Tribes for TERO, licensing & tax codes.
- Make sure to ask about payment and invoice processes.



Takeaway:

Don't get too comfortable.



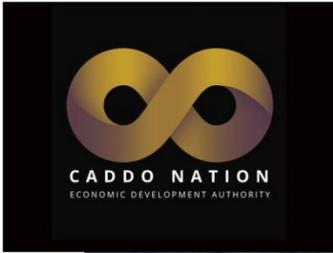
Stronger Together: Call to Action



- Tribes are ready for strong partners
- Opportunities span housing, energy, infrastructure, health, safety, community resource, etc.
- Bring reliability, respect, and solutions
- Build relationships - unlock decades of impact



Contact:
Sarah Yanez
syanez@kawnationindustries.com
(918) 493-2550



Stronger Together: Call to Action



**THE OPPORTUNITY IS
BIGGER THAN
CONTRACTS...**

**IT'S ABOUT BUILDING
NATIONS, TOGETHER**



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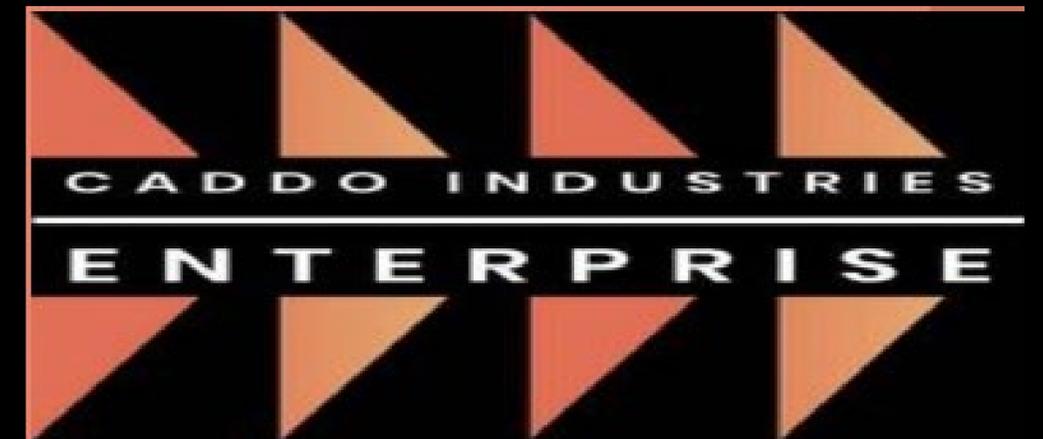
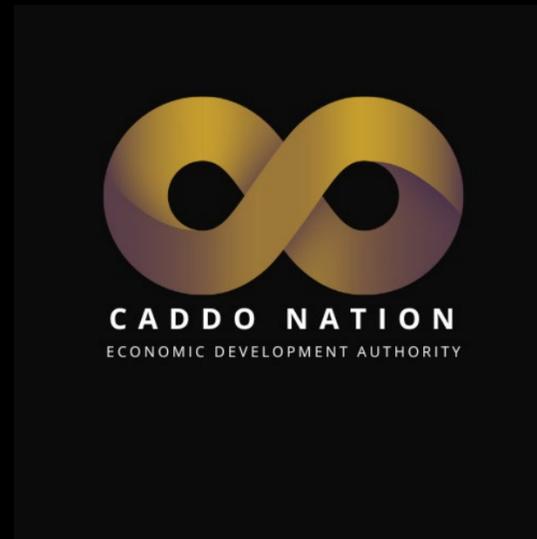
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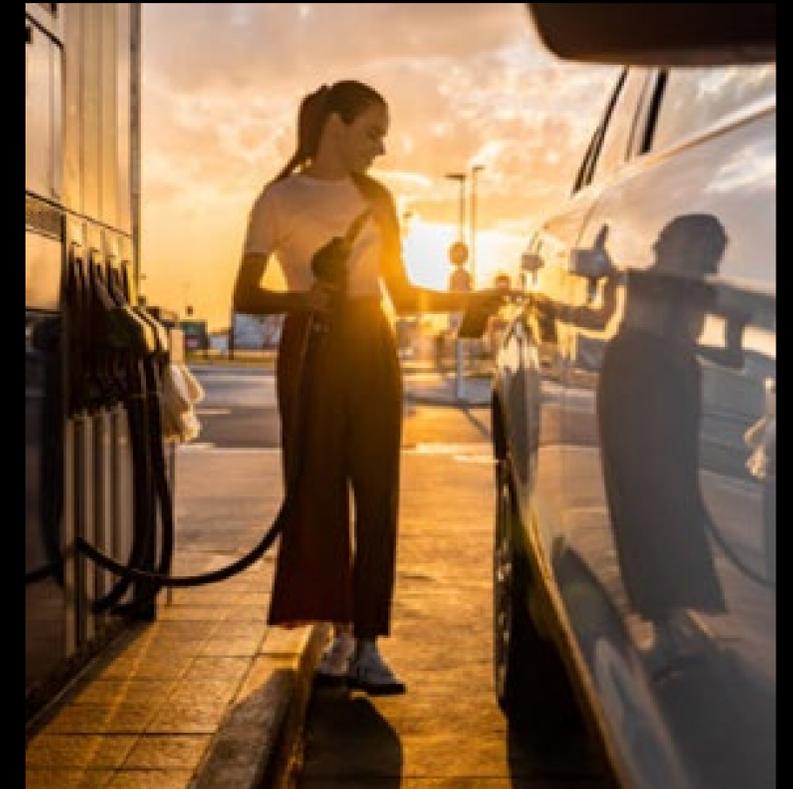




Wistsi Shared Services



Retail





**Building Communities,
Developing Workforce,
Managing Projects**



Founded: April 2023

2023 Caddo Nation Child Care Center

\$3.4M Caddo County Road Construction Contract

Anadarko Restoration Project

2025 Projects: Fusion Center



-
- *Architect Magazine*
“How Architecture Can Learn from Native America,”
2024
 - *AIA Santa Fe: Concept Innovation Award*
2023
 - *AIA New Mexico: Unbuilt Design Award*
2023

Cummins Road: A testament to collaboration.



\$3.4M

1
County

2
Two Tribes

Multiple
Federal
Agencies

Empowering Native Tribes through
Sustainable Solar Energy



Proven Solar Offerings

Professional Services

NABCEP Solar Design (PVIP, PVDS, PVA)

Architectural Design (AIA)

Structural Engineering (SEI)

Electrical Design (Master Electricians)

Energy Modeling

Financial, Tax, and Legal

Capital (Loans, Service Agreement, PPA, C-Pace, Match-making)

Financial Modeling and Analysis

Tax Guidance and CPA Support

Legal Amendments

Grant Writing and Adder Support

Product & Installation

Project Management

Experienced Crews (in-market)

OSHA Certified

First Pass Inspections

13th Month Report

Caddo Child Care Center

Hinton, Oklahoma



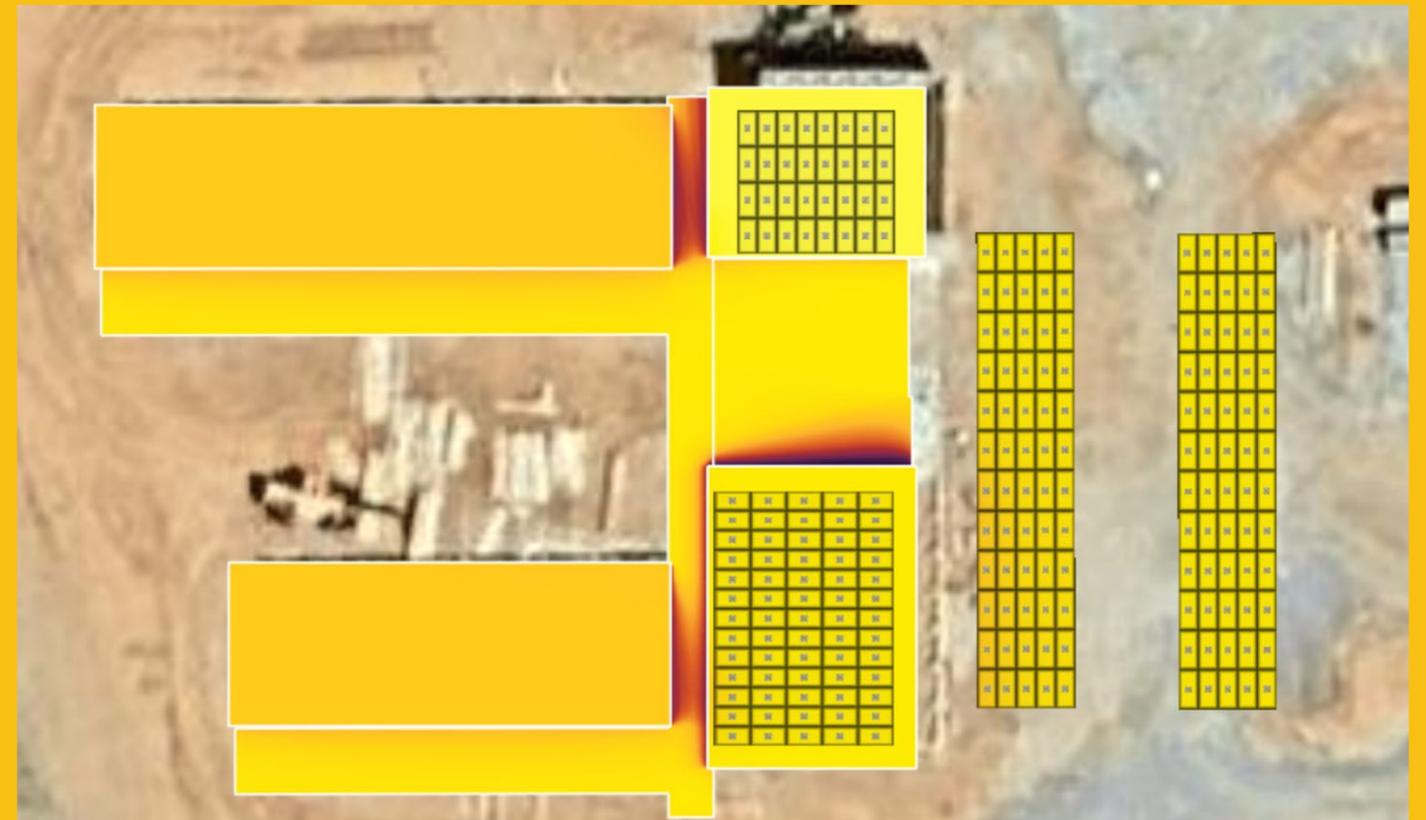
Rooftop + Solar Carports

of Solar Panels 217

System Size: 115.8 kW

Annual Production: 170,000+ kWh

Energy Offset: 105%



SAKU

Caddo Travel Plaza

Binger, Oklahoma

Rooftop

of Solar Panels 414

System Size: 207 kW

Annual Production: 293,003 kWh/y

Energy Offset: 98.86%



Saku Powers Your Tribe's Future with Solar

Saku is joint venture with Eight Twenty/Brightwell

Best-in-Class Solar Expertise



The American Institute of Architects



ACCREDITED MASTER ELECTRICIAN



Howih –

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